3c

N'atthi Putta, sama Sutta

The Discourse on Without Equal to a Son | **\$ 1.13**Theme: Supreme love, wealth, light and water

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1 Sutta summary

The N'atthi Putta,sama Sutta (S 1.13) is a short discourse of 2 verses, the first spoken by a deity of 4 things of the highest values in the world but in limited ways, the Buddha states them in a broader and real, even spiritual, terms:

The love for children is only real for those with a family but <u>self-love</u> is practically universal.	[2.2; 3,2]
Grain has greater practical value (more versatile) than cattle.	[2.3; 3.3]
Rain is supreme even over oceans, whose waters it provides.	[2.5; 3.4]
Above, all wisdom is the supreme light, outshining even that of the sun itself.	[2.4; 3.5]

2 The deity's verse (S 24*)

2.1 The deity's verse (S 24*) is probably a popular gnomic saying¹ put into a quatrain. The lines might have originally been separate sayings on their own, or they could have existed as a popular quatrain of slokas. They are uttered by the deity but the sayings, ironically, represent worldly or human proclivities.

2.2 "There is no love like that for a son" [S 24a]

2.2.1 A familial love

- **2.2.1.1** This line states the high regard the ancient Indians had for the family and for children, especially **a son**, who are valued as propagators and proliferators of the family line. The Commentary says that though our child may not be good-looking, we still deem him charming and cherish him despite his shortcomings. (SA 1:32,29 f).
- **2.2.1.2** The love for children [S 24a*] and having cattle as wealth [S 24b*] are what the Buddha calls "acquisitions" (*upadhi*), which keeps us fettered to the world and burdened with death and rebirth. Māra thus notoriously declares the benefits of <u>children and cattle</u>:

One with children² delights in children, thus, the herdsman truly delights in cattle. For, acquisitions³ are a delight to man; one without acquisition delights not.

(Sn 33, Māra), SD 50.20⁴

2.2.2 Worldly love

2.2.2.1 The word used by the Sutta for "love" is **pema**, which can be taken here simply to refer to worldly love defined by the deity as that for a "son" (putta), but which can be understood more generally as a synecdoche (shorthand) for a child or children. In other words, it is a kind of <u>familial</u> love.

¹ On gnomic sayings, see SD 54.2a (3.2.2).

² "Children," puttā, usu tr as "sons," but here refers to both sons and daughters (SnA 2: 44,11).

³ On *upadhi*, see SD 50.20 (1.1.1; 3.2) & DEB sv.

 $^{^{4}}$ = S 22*-23* (SD 54.3b) = S 461*-462*, a deity (SD 54.3a).

Love, as a socially acceptable behaviour, should be *reciprocal*. In other words, it is not only the love of a parent for a child, but the child should return or reciprocate that love by showing due respect and kindness to his or her parents. What the deity only *says* in a single line, the Buddha has taught *in practical detail* in such discourses as **the Ṭhāna Putta Sutta** (A 5.39) [2.2.2.2] and **the Sigāl'ovāda Sutta** (D 31) [2.2.2.3].

2.2.2.2 In **the Thāna Putta Sutta** (A 5.39), the Buddha gives these <u>5 reasons</u> that "parents wish for a son to be born into the family," thus:

- (1) 'Having been supported, he will support us in turn,' or
- (2) 'He will perform duties for us,' or
- (3) 'He will keep the family tradition standing long,'5 or
- (4) 'He will be worthy of his heritage,' or
- (5) 'He will make offerings (dakkhiṇa) to the dead and departed.' (A 5.39/3:43 f), SD 4.1(1.3)

These teachings are elaborated in **the Sigāl'ovada Sutta** (D 31) as reciprocal duties between both children and parents [2.2.2.3].

2.2.2.3 In the Sigāl'ovāda Sutta (D 31), the Buddha repeats the same list of <u>duties of a child</u>—that is, "a son or a daughter"—should discharge to parents, and what parents should do out of love for their child or children, thus:

In <u>5 ways</u>, young houselord, <u>parents</u> as *the east* [the front quarter], should be ministered to by **a son** or **a daughter**, considering:⁷

- (1) 'Having been supported by them, I will support them in turn.'
- (2) 'I will do their work for them.'
- (3) 'I will keep the family tradition.'8
- (4) 'I will be worthy of my heritage.'
- (5) 'And I will make offerings (dakkhina) to the dead and departed.'9

The parents, young houselord, as *the east*, having been ministered thus by <u>the son</u> or <u>the daughter</u> show them their¹⁰ compassion in these <u>5 ways</u>, thus:¹¹

- (6) They restrain him from bad.
- (7) They exhort him to do good.

⁵ Dīgha Comy ad D 28 (3) says: By guarding the wealth and property gathered by one's parents, and if parents lack faith in the Dharma, one restores family honour by giving different types of donations (such as ticket food, etc) to the order (DA 3:953).

⁶ That is, by dedicating merits to the departed parents. See **(Saddha) Jāņussoņī S** (A 10.177/5:269-273), SD 2.6a & **Tiro,kuḍḍa S** (Kh 7/6), SD 2.7.

⁷ This whole section forms a sutta called **Ṭhāna Putta S** (A 5.39/3:43 f), SD 4.1(1.3), restated as a parent's reasons for having a son.

⁸ *Kula,vaṁsaṁ ṭhapessāmi.* "The family tradition," *kula,vaṁsa,* ie, by guarding the wealth and property gathered by one's parents, and if parents lack faith in the Dharma, one restores family honour by giving different types of donations (ticket food, etc) to the order (DA 3:953). Cf *kula,vaṁsaṁ ciraṁ ṭhassati,* "He will keep the family tradition standing long" (Ṭhāna Putta S, A 5.39/3:43 f), SD 4.1(1.3) .

⁹ Atha vā pana petānaṁ kāla,katānaṁ dakkhiṇaṁ anuppadassāmī, ie, by dedicating merits to the departed.

¹⁰ This is a common-gender plural.

¹¹ Duties (7) & (8) are identical to those of the recluses and brahmins reciprocating the son of family's goodness [§33fg].

- (8) They have him trained in a profession. 12
- (9) They arrange for his marriage to a suitable wife [suitable husband]. 13
- (10) They hand over his inheritance in due time.¹⁴

In these 5 ways, young houselord, the parents, as the east, having been ministered thus by the son [or daughter] show them their compassion.

Thus the east is covered by him and made safe and secure.

(D 31,28/3:189), SD 4.1

Even at this simple level, the Buddha has social teachings for a happy and productive family, that is a family "that loves itself." Love, then, begins with the self, broadens into that for the family. We will below examine further the significance of such a <u>self-love</u> that is psychologically healthy and socially wholesome. ¹⁵ [3.2]

2.3 "No wealth equals that of cattle" [S 24b]

2.3.1 Worldly wealth

2.3.1.1 CATTLE AS WEALTH. <u>S 24b</u> reflects the popular notion of lasting, palpable and public sign of wealth, that is, cattle. Also valued are <u>the 5 bovine products</u> (*pañca go,rasa*)—milk (*khīra*), cream (*dadhi*), buttermilk [curds] (*takka*), butter (*navanīta*), ghee (*sappi*). The vital products are consumed on an almost daily basis by most Indians.

During the Buddha's time, the cow was not yet deemed sacred, a notion that arose centuries later. ¹⁷ Cow-dung (digested grass waste) is often used in traditional homes for smearing up the house walls and floor. Sun-dried, it is used as a cheap source of fuel. Cow's urine is fermented and used by forest monks as a medical lotion. ¹⁸

2.3.1.2 DHANIYA'S WEALTH. This is the kind of wealth that Dhaniya celebrates, as recorded in **the Dhaniya Sutta** (Sn 1.2), that of cattle. The whole sutta is a "mirror" ballad (a poem of contrapuntal¹⁹ verses that can be sung), with Dhaniya the herdsman singing about his worldly blessings and the Buddha giving a spiritual response. The first 2 poems go thus:

Dhaniya's verse

I've boiled the rice, I've milked the cows, (thus said Dhaniya the herdsman,) with my family I dwell on Mahī's bank.

The hut is thatched, the fire is fed—rain, therefore, rain if you wish! (Sn 18)

The Buddha's response

Without anger am I, barrenness gone, (thus said the Blessed One,) for (only) a night I dwell on Mahī's bank.
Uncovered is the hut, the fire's quenched—rain, therefore, rain if you wish! (Sn 19)

¹² "Profession," *sippa*, lit "the arts," but here, following Comy, it has been rendered so. Comy says that the son is trained in the family profession such as conveyancing [transfer of property], accounting, etc (DA 3:953).

¹³ Paţirūpena dārena saṁyojenti, lit "they have him bound to a suitable woman," which is said in reference to Indian society in the Buddha's time. In contemporary terms, this has to be contextualized to "they let their son or daughter find a suitable spouse."

¹⁴ That is, at proper times and at death (DA 3:953).

¹⁵ On a mother's love for her child, see SD 54.3d (2.5.2).

¹⁶ Lit "the 5 tastes of a cow" (V 1:244; DhA 1:158, 323, 397; SnA 322; VvA 147). See esp **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,52 +n) SD 7.14; SD 50.20 comy 9-10 (2) n.

¹⁷ A N Bose, *Social Rural Economy of Northern India, 600 BC-200 AD* states that the sacred cow notion was a late idea, current only by 200 AD. See also Auboyer 1965:198.

¹⁸ See SD 24.6a (2.3.1.2(2)); also DEB: urine (one of the 4 supports).

¹⁹ Dhaniya sings the leading verses (on worldly acquisitions); the Buddha responds to each verse (spiritual gains).

Further in the ballad, Dhaniya lists the acquisitions of his cattle wealth as follows:

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"In the marshes, lush with grass, the cattle roam. {Sn 20b}

"Heifers<sup>20</sup> have I, suckling calves [milch cows]<sup>21</sup> have I,
calving cows and mature oxen, too, have I.

A noble bull, lord of the herd, too, here, 22 have I." (Sn 26)

"The suckling calves ..." (Sn 28c)<sup>23</sup>
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2.4 "No light is there like that of the sun" [S 24c] presents to us the heart of the ancient Indian heliocentric universe, the source of all light and life: **the sun**. The ancient learned Indians had only a hazy idea of the universe. Traditionally, it was a flat disc-shaped earth which seems to extend over the whole of Asia and perhaps Africa, too.²⁴ However, the ancient Indians probably never saw their universe as a solar system. However, as here, we see a hint of their awareness of the cosmic significance of the sun.

The sun plays a vital role as the physical centre of the Buddha universe. **The Aggañña Sutta** (D 27) attests to the Buddhist awareness of relationship between the sun, the moon and the heavenly with the nature of **time.**²⁵ Early Buddhist cosmology is very close to conceiving a heliocentric universe by often mentioning "the moon and the sun" (*candima,suriya* or *canda,suriya*) at the head of the heavenly bodies comprising each of the numerous world systems or universes they mention, such as in **the Kosala Sutta 1** (A 10.29).²⁶ They were also aware that the destruction of the sun marked the end of the physical universe, as evident from **the Satta Suriya Sutta**, the discourse on the 7 suns (A 7.63).²⁷

2.5 "Amongst the waters, the ocean is supreme" [S 24d] speaks of another vital natural element for life on earth: water. The ancient Indians well understood the nature, extent and value of the seas and oceans. They were aware of lands beyond the waters, especially of south and southeast Asia, and were clearly influenced by the Mesopotamian and Persian civilizations farther west, 28 and probably even of the ancient Greeks and Spartans. Indian sailors probably have sailed as far south as Cape Agulhas, off the southernmost tip of Africa where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic, and perhaps even beyond. 30 [3.5]

3 The Buddha's verse (S 25*)

3.1 CONTRASTS.

3.1.1 While the deity sings of the joys and wonders of the **mundane world**, the Buddha replies with a more sublime truth of greater spiritual significance. There are no directly deep teachings here. Dharma teachings are only found in <u>lines a and c</u> (the 1^{st} and 3^{rd} lines). In **line a**, the Buddha merely reminds us

²⁰ "Heifers," etc. A <u>heifer</u> is a young cow, esp one that has not yet calved. Dhaniya mentions altogether 5 kind of cattle: see comy 9-10 (2-4).

²¹ Dhenu, $p\bar{a} = dhenu$, "milk" + $p\bar{a}$, "drinker." Comy however seems uncertain: see comy 9-10 (2).

²² On the two occurrences of "here" (idha) (Sn 26c + 27c), see comy 9-10 (7).

²³ Sn 1.2/p3-6 (SD 50.20).

²⁴ For an Indian palaeogeography (Jambu, dīpa), see SD 16.15 (3).

²⁵ D 27,12.2/3:86 (SD 2.19).

²⁶ See, eg, **(Dasaka) Kosl S** (A 10.29,2/5:59 f), SD 16.15.

²⁷ **Satta Suriya S** (A 7.63/4:100-106), SD 47.8.

²⁸ On the ancient Indians' awareness of the Middle East, see SD 36.10 (2.2.4, 4.1.1.4).

²⁹ See SD 40a.2 (3.2, 3.4).

³⁰ On accounts of the ancient sea-faring Indians, see SD 52.9 (2.2.2.5).

that <u>self-love</u> is the greatest of love [3.2], and in <u>line c</u>, he declares that of all light, <u>wisdom</u> is supreme [3.4].

3.1.2 The two remaining lines, <u>lines b and d</u> (the 2nd and 4th lines) are quite mundane statements. In **line b**, the Buddha simply declares that <u>grain</u> (rather than cattle) is the best of worldly wealth [3.3], In **line d**, which deals with a natural but worldly truth, the Buddha states that <u>rain</u> is the best of all waters [3.5].

This is all we seem to see in **the N'atthi Putta,sama Sutta** (S 1.13). Clearly, the Buddha must has given other teaching in these connections. We will gather together some of these connected ($sa\dot{m}yutta$) sutta teachings and commentaries below for Dharma reflection and practice. These are merely some pointers to begin with: you are encouraged to search the suttas for further connected teachings and study their connections for the enrichment of your Dharma growth.

3.2 "THERE IS NO LOVE LIKE THAT FOR THE SELF" [S 25a]

3.2.1 Self-love and the golden rule

3.2.1.1 The Commentary explains that there is no love or affection (*pema*) like that for oneself because people, even if they fail to love their parents and do not care for their children, they still care for themselves (SA 1:33,7-10). This broad sense of love is described in **the (Piya) Mallikā Sutta** (S 3.8 = U 5.1) which records how when king Pasenadi asks his chief queen, Mallikā:

"Is there or not one who is more beloved than your own self?"

He was hoping that Mallikā would say that she loved him more than she loved herself. Mallikā, however, replied rather cautiously, thus:

"There is no one, maharajah, dearer to me than myself.

Is there, maharajah, anyone dearer to you than yourself?"

The king had to reply:

"For me, too, Mallikā, there is no one dearer to me than myself."

Later, when the king related this incident to the Buddha, he uttered this verse:

Sabbā disā anuparigamma cetasā n'ev'ajjhagā piya,taram attanā kvaci evam piyo puthu attā paresam tasmā na himse param-atta,kāmô ti Having traversed all the quarters with the mind, one surely finds none anywhere dearer than oneself. Thus for each of us love the self the most—therefore, one who loves the self should not harm another. (\$ 382 @ \$ 3.8 = U 5.1), \$D 38.7

3.2.1.2 This kind of "self-love" is actually a natural sense of <u>self-preservation</u>. It is "natural" in the sense that it is universal, hardwired in our minds and is found both in animals and in humans. In animals and our "animal" nature, this is the survival instinct, when we will do anything or sacrifice anything for the sake of our own survival. When this natural instinct is understood as our <u>human nature</u>, it can be used as a means of justification for the "golden rule." ³¹

We know that we love ourself, but this is also true of all others humans, in fact, of all living beings. For this reason, we should **respect life**, we should neither deprive others of their life, nor hurt them in any way. Just as we do not want others to hurt or kill us, we should not hurt or kill others. This can be said to be a kind of "enlightened self-interest."

³¹ See SD 1.5 (1).

3.2.2 Levels of love

For a better idea of the meaning of *pema* [3.3.2.4] in early Buddhism, we should examine its place and context in terms of <u>the 5 types of love</u>, ³² as discussed in some detail in **Love**, SD 38.4. A summary and highlights of these types of love are given here:

- **3.2.2.1 Sensual lust (***kāma***).** This is the most basic of our <u>biological instincts</u> which ranges from that of self-survival, the propagation of one's self and family, and the survival of the tribe with which one is instinctively connected. Most commonly, however, it is an instinct motivated by sensual pleasures, and the desire to get and enjoy such pleasures; hence, it is called "<u>sensual lust</u>." Basically, this is an expression of our animal nature; hence, we can call it "animal love."³³
- **3.3.2.2 Familial love (***vissāsa***)**. Although sensual lust can extend itself as an <u>instinct</u> for self-propagation (dissemination of one's seeds) in terms of a family, this is likely to be motivated by the desire for power, such as in royal and political marriages. Familial love may be rooted in a natural urge to disseminate one's seeds but it is less rooted in pleasure and not motivated by power, but by love. The truly good family, then, is that arising from the seeds of selfless love.

The family, then, ideally, is a biological and social association of humans bound less by blood but more by love. Its predominant characteristic is an ambience for human growth (humanization), the development of our personal goodness and higher qualities, and contributes, directly or indirectly, to the betterment of the community or society. Such a family is the foundation of the good society.³⁴

- **3.3.2.3** Hospitality (*paţisanthāra*). When family love is extended to those outside the family, especially to guests and outsiders (especially renunciants and Dharma workers), then it is said to be <u>hospitality</u>. Such love and respect are extended to worthy renunciants and Dharma workers because they are "worthy of hospitality" (*pāhuneyya*). The masculine term *pahuna* refers to a "guest," and its neuter form refers to "the meal or care for a guest." ³⁶
- **3.3.2.4 Friendly love (pema)**. When family love and mutual respect are extended to others, especially those with whom we are close or intimate, it is called "friendly love" or simply <u>companionship</u> ($sahayat\bar{a}$). When such a warm feeling is shared by friends with mutual deep respect, or based in a common Dharma practice, then, they are called "true-hearted friends" ($suhad\bar{a}$, mitta).³⁷
- **3.3.2.5 Unconditional love (***mettā***)**. The highest form of love we must cultivate towards ourself and to others is <u>unconditional love</u> or "divine love." It is called <u>divine love</u> because the **godliness** (*devatā*) of Mahā Brahmā (the lord of the high gods of the 1st-dhyana heavens) himself is characterized by loving-kindness. It is through this practice and personality that one assumes the true Godliness. It is not someone or something to be worshipped, but a quality we should cultivate right here and now for our own benefit, the benefit of others close to us, and for all beings.

³² See **Love**, SD 38.4.

³³ For details, see SD 38.4 (1.2.1; 3).

³⁴ For details, see SD 38.4 (4).

³⁵ **Ussūra Bhatta S** (A 5.228/3:260) SD 76.4; J 6:24, 516.

³⁶ **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3,1.24/1:97), SD 21.3 = **Assalāyana S** (M 93,15/2:154), SD 40a.2; Vism 7.96/220; DA 1:267,9 f. For details, see SD 38.4 (5).

³⁷ **Sigāl'ovāda S** (D 31,21-26), SD 4.1; **Dūta S** (A 8.16), SD 46.7 (8.2); **Group karma**, SD 39.1 (7.1). For details, see SD 38.4 (6).

Lovingkindness, then, is characterized by treating others with same love, kindness and respect to others as we would towards ourself. Lovingkindness, as such, is the full and true practice of <u>the golden</u> rule.³⁸

3.3 "No WEALTH EQUALS THAT OF GRAIN" [S 25b]. There is no wealth equal to grain because when there is a famine or when people are without food, they will give away gold, silver and what valuables they have to obtain grain (SA 1:33,10 f). Although <u>cattle</u> is considered *prestigious wealth* (wealth as status), entailing that the cowherd also owns land, to have **grain** is <u>practical wealth</u>, since grain is the staple food for the people. The people may do without any of the 5 bovine products—milk, cream, buttermilk, butter or ghee [2.3.1.1] —but they will starve without grain.

3.4 "AMONGST THE WATERS, THE RAIN IS SUPREME" [S 25d]

3.4.1 Among the waters **rain** is supreme because when there is no rain, especially during a drought, even the rivers and lakes would dry up. Although there is sea-water, it cannot be used because it is saline, and cannot be used for human consumption or to irrigate the fields. Rain, as we all know, is a vital part of <u>the water-cycle</u>. The ancient Indians were aware of the water-cycle of the rains over land but were probably unaware of how clouds were formed through evaporation of water from the oceans and water-surfaces.

When we understand the water-cycle, we will see that water in the oceans, seas and water-bodies are merely liquid water. They evaporate in the sun's heat to become clouds, which then condense as rain falling to flow into lakes, rivers and oceans. In other words, rain and water are actually the same thing. It is interesting that the deity probably did not know this.

3.4.2 Rain and flowing water

3.4.2.1 Rain and flowing water form important imageries for various good qualities and processes in early Buddhism. In **the Sumanā Rāja,kumārī Sutta** (A 5.31), the Buddha praises the <u>generosity</u> of the true follower in these words, beautifully describing how rain comes down from the clouds:

Just as a thundering rain-cloud, hundred-crested, garlanded in lightning, raining down upon the earth, filling high plains and low valleys ... (A 5.31,13*/3:34), SD 22.14

3.4.2.2 The (Sotāpatti-y-aṅga) Vassa Sutta (S 55.38) describes how the 4 limbs of streamwinning—faith in the 3 jewels and moral virtue dear to the noble ones—grow like the flow of waters down from the rains in the mountains and down to earth, thus:³⁹

Just as (in a crashing thunderstorm)⁴⁰ the rains fall in huge drops on the mountain-tops,

the waters flowing down along the slopes, fill up the mountain clefts, gullies and streams.

When the mountain clefts, gullies and streams are full, they fill the ponds.
When the ponds are full, they fill the lakes.
When the lakes are full, they fill the rivulets.
When the rivulets are full, they fill the rivers.
When the rivers are full, they fill the great ocean.

(S 55.38,2/5:396), SD 45.10

³⁸ For details, see SD 38.4 (7).

³⁹ This passage recurs in **Catu Kāla S 2** (A 4.147/2:140), SD 62.18, where our attaining arhathood is compared to the waters flowing and filling the oceans.

⁴⁰ At **A 10.61**,3/5:114,7 + 6/5:115,28 (but omitted in some MSS), **10.62**,3/5:117,21 + 6/5:119,5.

- **3.4.2** While it is true that when there is no **rain**, even the great ocean would dry up, it is also true that when the rains, as <u>the water element</u>, pour down ceaselessly upon the earth, the world becomes a single mass of water engulfing even the 1st-dhyana Brahma worlds, stopping only just before the 2nd-dhyana Ābhassara deva world (SA 1:33,17-22). In this case, "**water**" refers to the 2nd natural state of matter as liquid, that is, some kind of cosmic meltdown occurs collapsing our universe into a "rolling-back" (*vivaṭṭa*) or big crunch at the end of <u>the world-cycle</u>.⁴¹
- **3.4.3 The Satta Suriya Sutta** (A 7.63), the discourse on the 7 suns, describes how when the world is destroyed by "fire"—that is, in some kind of cosmic nuclear reaction—the waters in the world would evaporate in stages, thus:

The 1st sun there is no rain; all plant life burn up and ceases to be.

The 2nd sun all streams and lakes dry up.

The 3rd sun all the great rivers dry up.

The 4th sun all the great lakes dry up.

The 5th sun the great oceans become puddles.

The 6th sun Sineru (the huge mountain ranges) or the axis mundi (galactic centre) blazes up.

The 7th sun the mountains and the world all blaze up.⁴²

The dramatic sequence of water disappearing from the earth highlights how life here is dependent on <u>water</u>. With the disappearance of water, all life of earth will be exterminated. Hence, compared to the bodies of water, including the oceans, <u>water</u> is clearly supreme.

3.4.4 It is odd that the line about waters [line d] is placed last in favour of what should be the most prominent truth—that of *light and wisdom*—that is, <u>line c</u>. This is perhaps understandable when we see them as a miscellaneous collection of popular gnomic sayings. Hence, here let us keep the highlight in its right place as the climax of our lesson [3.5] and deal with <u>line d</u> on the waters first.

3.5 "NO LIGHT IS THERE LIKE WISDOM" [S 25c]

- **3.5.1** We can rightly surmise that the key idea of both the verses should be **wisdom**, despite its being placed in the second last line of the closing verse. The Pali texts, we must remember, were originally meant to be <u>heard</u>. Having heard both these verses of 4 lines each with their separate themes, the wise listener is likely to naturally "rearrange" the ideas according to their significance, or to pick out their key idea to be remembered.
- **3.5.2** The Commentary explains that there is no light like **wisdom** because wisdom can light up <u>the</u> 10,000 world systems⁴³ and dispel the darkness of ignorance that would otherwise blind them over the 3 periods of time. Even the sun's power to brighten these worlds is limited and cannot brighten it the

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⁴² A 7.63/4:100-106 (SD 47.8).

⁴¹ This refers to the cosmic cycle. *Vivattā*, "rolling back" = the collapsing (devolving) universe ("big crunch"); followed by a collapsed universe (like a "black hole"); then, *saṃvaṭṭa*, "rolling forth" = the re-evolving universe ("big bang"); and then, an expanded "steady-state" universe: these 4 stages constitute a "world-cycle" (*kappa*). See **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,32/1:14), SD 25.2; **(Catukka) Kappa S** (A 4.156/2:142), SD 2.18(9); **Mā Puñña Bhāyī S** (It 22/1.3.2/15,-5-8), SD 2.11b; **(Tika) Te,vijja S** (It 3.5.10/99,5 f); **Puggala Attan Tapa S** (Pug 4.24/60,8 f) = A 4.198 (SD 56.7).

⁴³ See **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,147), SD 25.2; **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,20), SD 1.1. For the early Buddhist conception of the universe, see SD 49.8b (15.1.3).

way that wisdom can. Sunlight may shine on people and light up places, but wisdom lights up our minds and, in due course, liberates us from the worlds themselves.

3.5.3 There are 5 consecutive discourses—the (Catukka) Ābhā Sutta (A 4.141/2:139), the (Catukka) Pabhā Sutta (A 4.142/2:139), the (Catukka) Ālokā Sutta (A 4.143/2:139), the (Catukka) Obhā Sutta (A 4.144/2:139 f) and the (Catukka) Pajjotā Sutta (A 4.144/2:140)—all of which speak of the 4 kinds of light: those of the moon, of the sun, of fire and of wisdom. The foremost of these lights is clearly that of wisdom. Both the moon shines in the night in the absence of the sun, and the sun shines only in the day. Even then, they may be hidden behind the clouds or some obstructions like trees, mountains and buildings. Fire is not always bright enough to shine like the moon or the sun, and is not always naturally present amongst us. We need to start it and maintain it.

Wisdom, when properly cultivated and attained, is able to brighten the world in that we are able to use it to use fire or invent lighting to brighten darkness so that we can see our way and even work in such light. Even more significant is that <u>wisdom</u> allows us to see the way that no light can: we are able to see through our ignorance and understand the nature of life as it really is, and be liberated from suffering by the light of awakening as the Buddha has done.

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N'atthi Putta,sama SuttaThe Discourse on Without Equal to a Son

S 1.13

1 Originating at Sāvatthī.

Standing at one side, the deity uttered this verse before the Blessed One:

(S 24)

N'atthi putta,samam pemam n'atthi go,samitam⁴⁵ dhanam n'atthi sūriya,samā⁴⁷ ābhā⁴⁸ samudda,paramā sarâti There is no love like that for a son;⁴⁴ no wealth equals that of cattle;⁴⁶ no light is there like that of the sun;⁴⁹ amongst the waters, the ocean is supreme.⁵⁰

(Bhagavā:)

(The Blessed One:)

3 N'atthi atta,samam pemam n'atthi dhañña,samam dhana n'atthi paññā,samā ābhā vuṭṭhi ve paramā sarâti. There is no love like that for the self;⁵¹ no wealth equals that for grain;⁵² no light is there like wisdom;⁵³

(S 25) amongst the waters, the rain is supreme.⁵⁴

- evam -

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⁴⁴ See (2.1).

⁴⁵ Here sa, mita mean sa, "with, as" (comparative) + mita, "measure."

⁴⁶ See (2.2)

⁴⁷ Be *suriya,samā*; Ce Ee Ke Se *suriya,samā*.

⁴⁸ There is a resolution of the 4th syllable to maintain the 8 syllables of a sloka line.

⁴⁹ See (2.3).

⁵⁰ See (2.4)

⁵¹ See (3.2).

⁵² See (3.3).

⁵³ See (3.4).

⁵⁴ See (3.5).